

ATAC's annual rating of drug company policies and practices

Merck & Co., Inc.	
<i>Grading Categories</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<p>Drug Development Portfolio and Plan— <i>Develops innovative treatments, designs safe and effective clinical trials.</i></p> <p>Merck made a significant long-term investment in scientific research during the development of Isentress (raltegravir), although women were underrepresented in its clinical trials. Merck consulted the treatment activist community throughout the drug's development and is fulfilling its postmarketing commitments.</p>	B+
<p>Access to Drugs— <i>Ensures the earliest and broadest possible access of its HIV drugs.</i></p> <p>Merck has a patient assistance program and recently announced a co-pay assistance program.</p>	C+
<p>Pricing— <i>Prices its products responsibly.</i></p> <p>Merck does not have a history of taking excessive price increases and has agreed to a price freeze through 2010.</p>	B
<p>Community Relations— <i>Engages the HIV community on trial design, company conduct and marketing efforts.</i></p> <p>Merck meets regularly with the treatment activist community. Input on trial design was sought early enough to allow changes to clinical trial protocols. Merck did not have a community member on its data safety monitoring board for Isentress.</p>	B-
<p>Marketing Practices— <i>Engages in marketing practices that are ethical and honest.</i></p> <p>Merck has not used negative or fear-based advertising for Isentress. It has received no warning letters from the FDA for its HIV products, though during the marketing of Crixivan (indinavir) there were community complaints about unrealistic advertising images.</p>	B-
Average Grade	B
<p><i>Suggestions for Improvement:</i></p> <p>Merck needs to improve recruitment of women and people of color in future trials, and include community members on its data safety monitoring boards and at its investigator meetings. The community would like Merck to cover 100% of co-pays.</p>	